

**Nine Boston Red Sox appear in MLB.com Top 100 Prospect Watch:
Shortstop Xander Bogaerts named No. 2 prospect in baseball**



Boston Red Sox shortstop Xander Bogaerts. (AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)



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It may seem silly to think now, having seen him go through a World Series run with the Boston Red Sox, but 21-year-old Xander Bogaerts is still considered a prospect.

With no Stephen Drew in sight, Bogaerts appears to be the man at shortstop heading into the 2014 season. The Sox's prize prospect has displayed confidence and ability to step up on the big stage and in a big market at two positions, playing both shortstop and third base towards the tail end of last season.

Beyond his performance on the field, Bogaerts has showcased an elite skillset that earned him a ranking as [No. 2 prospect in all of baseball by MLB.com](#).

Bogaerts is one of nine players in the Red Sox system ranked in the Top 100 Prospect Watch, which ranks prospects based off of scouting reports that rate a player's individual skills from 20 to 80.

Bogaerts came in behind No. 1 prospect Byron Buxton of the Minnesota Twins' system, who blew away the competition with an overall grade of 75. Meanwhile, the Red Sox's shortstop of the future scored a 65 overall with a 60 in hitting, 70 in power, 50 in running, 60 for his arm and 55 in fielding.

Here's the scouting report from MLB.com:

"Bogaerts has shot through the Minor Leagues since signing with the Red Sox out of Aruba in 2009. He made his Major League debut as a 20-year-old in August 2013, becoming the youngest Red Sox position player in 41 years. He then played his way onto the postseason roster and became the youngest player to ever start a playoff game for the Red Sox.

During his brief time in the big leagues, Bogaerts showed the kind of special player he can be. He uses his smooth, balanced swing to make hard contact and drive the ball to all fields. He has big raw power and already knows how to use it in games. Bogaerts saw time at both shortstop and third base in Boston and he is capable of playing either position. Some scouts feel he will outgrow shortstop, but there's nothing in his game that prevents him from playing there now. He has good range, soft hands and a strong arm.

Bogaerts wasn't overmatched at all in the big leagues -- even under the bright lights of the playoffs -- and he has all the hallmarks of a future star."

Despite the prospect label, Bogaerts is slated to become the Red Sox's starting shortstop on opening day, and he's not the only player on the list who's ready to go.

Outfielder Jackie Bradley Jr., who made the opening day roster last year before going back to AAA Pawtucket, ranked 33rd. He's in line to either start or play a significant role on the major league roster in 2014. On top of Bradley, there are two other Red Sox prospects currently on the Red Sox 40-man roster, No. 46 RHP prospect Allen Webster and No. 57 3B prospect Garin Cecchini.

The Red Sox are in a strong position for the immediate future, coming off of a World Series championship with multiple top-tier prospects ready to fill in the void of high-priced veterans who left the team via free agency (Stephen Drew and Jacoby Ellsbury). However, the Red Sox still have strong long-term prospects deep into their farm system.

The team's top pitching prize -- No. 20 LHP prospect Henry Owens -- figures to be a major factor in the team's future rotation. Very much like Jon Lester and Clay Buchholz before him, the Red Sox are expecting to plug him into the rotation for years. No. 86 RHP prospect Matt Barnes could also play a role soon. He's currently at Pawtucket.

Further down the system, the Red Sox have position players such as No. 61 C prospect Blake Swihart. He, along with fellow catching prospect Christian Vazquez are a large part of the reason that the Red Sox let Jarrod Saltalamacchia walk in free agency and signed A.J. Pierzynski to a one-year deal.

Finally, the Red Sox's most recent first round pick -- No. 96 LHP prospect Trey Ball -- made the cut, representing the type of down-the-road prospect the team needs to keep the farm system stocked.

Here's all the Red Sox prospect ranked in the Top 100:

- No. 2: Xander Bogaerts, SS (Boston Red Sox) - Overall scouting grade: 65
- No. 20: Henry Owens, LHP (AA Portland) - Overall scouting grade: 60
- No. 33: Jackie Bradley, OF (Boston Red Sox) Overall scouting grade: 60
- No. 46: Allen Webster, RHP (AAA Pawtucket/Red Sox 40-man roster) Overall scouting grade: 60
- No. 57: Garin Cecchini, 3B (AAA Pawtucket/Red Sox 40-man roster) Overall scouting grade: 55
- No. 61: Blake Swihart, C (Advanced A Salem) - Overall scouting grade: 55
- No. 62: Mookie Betts, 2B (Advanced A Salem) - Overall scouting grade: 55
- No. 86: Matt Barnes, RHP (AAA Pawtucket) - Overall scouting grade: 55
- No. 96: Trey Ball, LHP (Rookie League) - Overall scouting grade: 55

Source : http://www.masslive.com/redsox/index.ssf/2014/01/nine_boston_red_sox_appear_in.html

